

HUMANITAS

2015, Volume XIX
A Literary Journal of the
Medical University of South Carolina



A Labyrinth of Learning:
The Medical University of South Carolina
and
Humanitas

As a comprehensive academic health science center the mission of MUSC is to preserve and optimize human life. Students and faculty are united in study, research and scholarship to increase understanding of every aspect of the human body in its extraordinary complexity. They enter a labyrinth of learning seeking knowledge and understanding that is utilized in environments of cultures and families, where the intangible elements impact all our knowledge and skills.

The challenge of preserving and optimizing human life requires deep learning and profound sensitivity. MUSC prepares us to be better scientists; *Humanitas* inspires us to be better citizens.

In these pages we see connections between images, imaginations, and words that exemplify the beauty as well as the complexity of life. We are inspired to intuit what we do not know, “listen eloquently” to what we cannot hear, and see with the “third eye” what we cannot see.

Humanitas inspires us to rise above the labyrinth and understand the whole even as we enter the labyrinth to know its infinite parts.

J. Herman Blake, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Humanities Scholar in Residence, 2007-2014
Medical University of South Carolina

THE HUMANITAS STAFF
EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ashley Smith..... College of Medicine
Benson Langdon..... College of Medicine
Brett Tomashitis..... College of Medicine
Caroline Duncan..... College of Medicine
Carolyn Vaught..... College of Medicine
Neda Mofrad..... College of Medicine
Raena Hariharan..... College of Medicine

FACULTY ADVISORS

Steven W. Kubalak

Regenerative Medicine and Cell Biology

Lisa Kerr

Center for Academic Excellence/The Writing Center

Edward Krug

Regenerative Medicine and Cell Biology

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Robert O. Drutel

College of Medicine

Foreword

I take great pleasure in presenting the XIX edition of the *Humanitas* publication that illustrates the artistic complexity and diversity of the Medical University of South Carolina community. Art provides us with the ability to translate our emotions into beauty and share it with the world. This book provides the reader a unique opportunity to share a glimpse of the passions of those around us at MUSC. I hope that you will enjoy the outstanding achievements that both novices and accomplished artists have submitted to this year's publication. Each year I have been amazed at how different art channels can come together in to, reflecting the creativity, beauty, dynamism and passion of the community. Art is always considered to benefit people and make their environment and surroundings gratifying. All media: words, a simple pencil, brush strokes and photography, are meant to inspire and I hope that in this book you will find encouragement and motivation to further your own pursuits.

I would like to thank all of the artists, photographers, poets and writers for sharing their works with a broader audience. We received numerous excellent entries and we tried to include as many as we could in this year's publication. *Humanitas* is constantly committed to promoting, inspiring and circulating artwork and I want to strongly encourage all to submit your entries next year. I also express my immense appreciation to the *Humanitas* team for successfully shaping this book. It was a great privilege to be a part of such an excellent and dedicated team. I especially extend my gratitude to the faculty members, whose knowledge, expertise, and guidance has been invaluable.



Robert O. Drutel
Editor-in-Chief

2015 HUMANITAS AWARDS FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

Excellence in Prose

“Jakarta Express”

John Minner

Student, College of Medicine

Excellence in Poetry

“Staccato”

Shannon Elam

Student, College of Nursing

Excellence in Photography

“Pelican Sunrise”

David Williams

Student, College of Medicine

Excellence in Visual Art

“Untitled”

Caroline Cox

Student, College of Medicine

2015 HUMANITAS

Content List

FRONT COVER: “Dew Drop Pearls,” Rupak Mukherjee, Faculty,
College of Medicine

1. “Jakarta Express,” John Minner
3. “Staccato,” Shannon Elam
4. “Pelican Sunrise,” David Williams
5. “Glitter,” Adam Smolka
7. “Two Sisters Diptych,” Christian Hicks
8. “New Normal,” Joshua Pagano
9. “Chasing Daylight,” Kelly Dillon
9. “Growing Down,” Nicole Bohm
10. “Watermelon,” Vitria Adisetiyo
11. “My Father’s Desk,” Stephen Schabel
13. “The Ballad of Wisdom,” Bion Alex Howard
14. “Mirror Mirror,” Theresa Cantu
15. “Laser Gaze,” Matthew Hale
16. “What a Little Moonlight Can Do,” Adam Smolka
18. “Untitled,” Caroline Cox
19. “Feet Are Neat,” Joe Gulick
19. “Will Someone Please Turn Off the Silence,” Deepak Kumar
20. “Bio Sketch,” John Dinolfo
20. “Breath,” Adrian Van Bakel
20. “Lovesick in Haiti,” Brice Reynolds

21. “Ice Arch,” Gregg Dwyer
 22. “A Study of William Maughan’s Work,” Maham Awan
 23. “What is a Princess To Do?” Brent Paape
 24. “4-Speed Chromatic,” Matt Ewald
 25. “Pea Plume,” Jameela Goudarzi
 26. “Knots,” William Oelsner
 28. “Hungry Hungry Hippos,” Katie Boland
 29. “Mishappenings,” Andrea Lopez
 30. “The City That Sleeps,” Chris Attaway
 31. “Untitled,” Kenny Vaden
 32. “A Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man,” Brice Reynolds
 34. “Canada Geese,” Steven Rosenzweig
 35. “Autumn Bling,” Lisa Graves
 36. “Searching for a Signal,” Tejbir Dhindsa
 36. “The Second Chance Below,” M. J. Ellison
 37. “Fallen Giant,” Matt Ewald
 38. “Gertrude’s Blue Boots,” Nancy Carney
 39. “An Epistle from My Mother,” Jenna-Lyn Johnson
 40. “The Visit,” Lynn Smith
 42. “Peace,” Dee Norton
 43. “Archtop Guitar,” Steven Rosenzweig
- BACK COVER: “Free Wishes,” Kelly Dillon, Staff, College of Medicine

Jakarta Express

John Minner, Student, College of Medicine

For most jobs, the payment was directly proportional to the paranoia. The pseudo-flesh bandage had started to itch. Normally, I wasn't privy to the knowledge of whatever I was carrying. My job was to look inconspicuous as I traveled from one seedy section of the megacity to another. I handed over my backpack with its secret lead-lined compartment, they placed their goods, and I could travel in complete ignorance of whatever horrors I carried.

Technically, nothing I was doing was illegal. Couriers were frequently stopped by police, and if we claimed to know nothing about our goods, they were merely seized. This was a very good way to get killed. I had no intentions of dying, so I was never stopped by police. It was my particular specialty.

This client apparently did not trust in my record.

I don't know who she was. I hadn't seen her before, and I certainly hadn't seen a dress that white in this part of town. No one spoke a word in the entire time I was in the warehouse. I could see the guards holding slugthrowers on the way in, although they weren't obvious. I also noticed the closed circuit cameras. While Jakartek was manufacturing the latest drones the size of sparrows which transmitted over cyberspace, someone was more concerned with security of information transmitted than with secrecy of recording.

The two goons who strapped the bandage onto me weren't careful, I guess, because I could see the hard drive as they slid it inside before passing a note to me.

"This bandage is filled with a deadly transdermal neurotoxin," it read. "If you attempt to alter its contents or remove it, the neurotoxin will release. If you do not make the delivery within 16 hours, it will release. The bandage will be removed only at your final destination, and the integrity of its contents will be confirmed before you receive your payment."

I didn't like the fact that she had altered the deal, but 14 goldens was a lot of bread. That kind of money attracted attention, so I started to worry about those sunglass-wearing men at the train station and whether I had seen them before.

The doors opened, and I started the timer on my watch. There were thirty seconds until the doors closed; I had done this trick often enough to have that part memorized. I ducked into the train and starting

moving down a car. I couldn't check yet if they were following, so I just moved, briskly as I could. Pushing people out of the way was a tactic: too forceful and I'd be conspicuous, but too light and it wouldn't cause any problems for my pursuers. If I did it just right, they'd be stuck inside while I slipped out of sight.

10 seconds. One more car, then slip out to the other platform. I managed to step over a vomit-soaked methamorph junky and make it to the other door just as it closed. I looked over my shoulder and saw one of men in sunglasses standing on the train, looking back at me. My paranoia had been founded. I kept focus on him as the train left the station. What I didn't notice, at first, was that only one of the men was on the train.

The other, I realized shortly, was still on the other side of the tracks from me, and sprinting toward me. I didn't stay to look to see if he could clear the 20 feet between the two platforms. I just ran, assuming that a cybernetically enhanced agent was pursuing me.

And if I didn't outrun him, I would be dead.

Most of the reason that I had never been snatched up by rollers is that I was willing to travel in places that they were not. I had grown up in places too disgusting, too lawless, too gene-poor for them to consider going. I knew these places well, and I knew the best ways through them. If I had enough time, I could make it from one side of Jabodetabek to the other without seeing so much as a patrolman's uniform. But I didn't have enough time, not today.

Still, entering a southside market usually meant that no one would dare follow you. The Paradiso gang that ran this one owed me a few favors, so I ran headlong into a group of them and pointed toward my pursuer.

I don't know if I expected them to stop him or just to slow him down, but they managed neither. I only glimpsed it in brief looks over my shoulder, but the sight of a Paradiso thug hurtling 30 feet through the air suggested that pneumatic legs were not the only enhancements the man in sunglasses possessed.

I ducked into an alley after I had lost him. I'd have to wait until he passed or until the Paradisos re-established their brutal order. I could take the catch the s-train if I climbed the tower where the monorail ran, then hitch up until-

The metal fist hit me in the chest like the kick of a mule, launching me on my back 20 feet into the alley. I looked up just as he got to me, and I could read the Jakartek logo on his metal calf. *So the rumors are true, I thought. Jakartek started manufacturing illegal bodymods. I wonder if...*

"We found the others," he said. "6 blank drives. Yours contains the algorithm. Hand it over."

I drew my vibroknife and stabbed him in the calf, then activated my modification.

The man crumpled to the ground, his robotic limbs seizing. Jakartek loved cutting corners to save coin, and evidently they hadn't secured their prototypes against standard pulse generation. My luck.

I didn't wait around. The monorail was three miles away, and I could still make the drop.

I had made it to Bekasi when he saw me again.

I was exhausted. I didn't stand a chance fighting, and I couldn't outrun him. I looked at my watch. 15 minutes remained.

I drew my gauss pistol and pointed it at the flesh bandage on my abdomen. The man in the sunglasses seemed to understand, and stopped about twenty feet from me.

We were alone on this rooftop. Wind was whipping through the air bringing the stench of the slums below.

"What is this?" I asked. "What's on this drive that you want so much?" I wanted to know that much before I died.

"It doesn't matter." He said. "I have a man who will pay very much for it."

"Can you take it?" I asked. "Can you take it without it killing me?"

The man only stared. That was enough.

I shot sideways through the bandage, destroying the hard drive, then ripped it off and threw it from the building. Pain seared through me as I collapsed onto the roof. I thought I saw the man in sunglasses jump after the drive, but things started to go blurry awfully quick. The pain turned to numbness, and I remembered the day my father first took me to work in the market.

I woke up in a bright room that smelled like Barat.

"He wakes." I heard her speak for the first time, the lady in the white dress.

"I'm still alive,"

"By my mercy. The antitoxin was delivered to you just in time."

It took all my strength just to sit up. The spot on my stomach where the bandage had been was red and swollen. "Why save me? Why save me when I failed?"

"Because you exhibited good judgment," she replied, loading up a syringe. "You sacrificed yourself to protect my property and destroyed it before it could fall into the wrong hands."

"And the drive?"

"Empty," she replied. "I sent out seven empty with different couriers to different destinations. Six were confiscated by the men you encountered. One was destroyed. They believe that yours must have contained my algorithm."

"Didn't it?"

She started to slide the needle into my forearm. "A man in an alley invites you to play a game. For a dollar, he puts a ball under a shell and mixes the shells up. If you win, he pays out five dollars. If you lose, he keeps your dollar. What are the odds that you pick the ball?"

"Zero." I knew the scam. I had done it. "The ball is in the man's hand. All the hard drives are empty. So your algorithm..."

"Sent encoded via cyberspace. No one expects it of the woman who doesn't have so much as a hardline in her entire operation."

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I respect your skills. And I have more work for you to do. Your payment is on the table. Return here when you are ready."

In this line of work, the payment was directly proportional to the paranoia.

I slept with the gauss pistol in my hand.

Staccato

Shannon Elam, Student, College of Nursing

	a
	dag
	io. off
	we go!
	into the w
	orld of musi
	cal flavor. tou
	ch a key, hear a
	sound, a sound yo
	ur ears will savor. on
	the page, black and white
	see the n otes awaiting,
	for the pl ayer to begin, the
	timing he' s debating. adante!
	we're on our way! moving ev
	er so mo derately, the pianist
	begins to pick up speed. his f
	ingers gli ding over the keys. O
	vertones and symphonies—m
	insets an d melodies. e—flat, b
	flat, g flat d flat. free compositio
	ns. fantas ial imagine that! Dyna
	mics, arpe ggios, mezzo forte, cre
	scendos.- come on now, let's do
	our best! quickly now. quarter
	rest! back to business, change
	tempo. fa ster now. allegro!
	quickly qu ickly. hit, hit hit!
	we can't s low down, no.
	not one bi t. rapid mov
	ement do wn the bo
	ard. One t wo thre
	e. strike a chord!
	mind is ra cing
	in a fuzz. no
	tes runni n
g	together
creating a buzz. we've	got to slo
w down. this is becoming a mess.	take a br
eak. whole rest. start again, very slow.	softly no
w. largo. tender notes played harmonious	ly. get re
ady for the finale. the pitch is rising, tensions m	ounting-
the tempo now is not worth counting. song pla yed almo	
st like a lullaby, with mini staccatos by and by.- things se	
eem like a whisper now. but the under beat is still goi	
ng strong, like the unrelenting wind howling all nigh	
t long. almost can't hear a thing now. little pulsa	
tions ringing through the air, reminding	
you of what was once there.	

Pelican Sunrise

David Williams, Student, College of Medicine



Glitter

Adam Smolka, Faculty, College of Medicine

Morty's Gold Mart was on the far side of the harbor, in the forlorn industrial corridor that led to the shipyards. Running on empty, I pulled into a pot-holed strip mall and, nervous about the gold coins in my coat, parked in front of a payday loan office next to Sharon's Salon, as far from Morty's as possible. Nobody was around as I walked over to the Gold Mart. I glanced into the salon in passing, and was startled to see an elderly black lady swiveling in a high chair and emphatically wagging her finger at me, but she was just discussing coiffure with Sharon.

A sign in the Gold Mart window promised electronic surveillance and armed response if needed. The door was locked, and a tarnished push-button dangling from a wire elicited only silence. I knocked discreetly; the sun shone brightly, cars sped by, and no one accosted me at gunpoint. Across the street, a cinder-block auto shop and a bail-bond office framed a view of the harbor, where a distant sailboat tacked against an onshore breeze. The door opened, and a short elderly man stood there, smiling broadly. He had an unkempt comb-over, hair sprouting from his ears, and a three-day stubble. Morty showed me in, double-locked the door, and slid a motel-style chain into its slot. He splayed his hands on a scratched glass counter-top.

"We have to be careful," he said, "I shot someone once, right here." He pointed a forefinger at me, his thumb cocked, as if to establish his credentials in the sketchy business of gold exchange. His shop was in disarray, much like himself. Dusty catalogs were piled on shelves among jumbled bric-a-brac. Cracked whitewash peeled from the walls, and rust crept up the side of a cast-iron safe. He booted up an ancient laptop while I opened my zip-lock bag and arranged the coins by denomination.

"Ah, Franz-Joseph, 1915, very nice," said Morty, "I don't see these too often. Takes me back, oh yes..." He studied a 100-corona piece through a jeweler's loupe. "Popular in East Europe before the war, say Austria, Hungary, Poland..." He looked up, and his sharp blue eye focused first on the laptop's scrolling gold valuations, and then on me. "Insurance," he said, "Everyone felt safer with a few coronas hidden away."

"Did you kill him?" I asked.

"Who? Oh no, I only maimed her. The bullet tore through her ear, ricocheted off the safe and got me in the eye." I looked more closely and realized that Morty's right eye was a glass marble, alert but ersatz. "I must have passed out," Morty said, "because next thing I knew I was blinded by OR floods and someone was saying count back from 100. In threes, please." His fingers slid up and down the stacked coins, while his good eye assessed their worth and the other one sized me up. I wondered whether to discuss the attempted robbery or the price of gold on the London exchange. Morty's probing glass eye nudged me onto a tangent.

"You're right about the coins," I said. "Years ago, hitch-hiking in Europe as a student, I stopped at my Aunt Theresa's in Vienna. She lived in the suburbs with her husband Walter, once a Wehrmacht captain, and my grandmother, who sat in a wheelchair and drifted in and out of dementia. We toured her well-tended garden, I plucked ripe plums from the trees, and I heard the story of these coins." Morty's exploring fingers paused, and he inclined his head attentively.

"After the war," I went on, "Theresa and Walter had moved into an abandoned apartment in central Vienna. One day, while assembling a mahogany dining table they had lugged down from the attics, Walter removed a canvas pouch stuffed into one of the legs. He untied the ribbon and these gold coins spilled out. Years later, long after my grandmother was dead and Walter had suffered a fatal heart attack, I visited Theresa in her dotage. She said the coins would come to me when she died, in remembrance of our family's ancestral heritage in Lvów, Poland."

"Lvów!" Morty cried out, "I was born in Lvów! Not many of us left now. Mostly we were herded onto trains and vanished. And now, coins that were the last hope of survival surface in my shop." A tear glistened in his eye as he peered over my shoulder and scrutinized the incomprehensible past. The moment passed, the everyday re-asserted itself, and Morty keyed numbers into his laptop. "For these, I can meet today's London rate," he said, "minus 10% commission."

I nodded. Morty spun the dial on the safe and the door swung open. He placed packets of bank notes on the counter and slit their paper bands with an ivory letter opener carved into the likeness of an alligator. His

lips shaped a silent count while his fingers snapped bill after bill, teller-style. I recalled the cortège of unknown elderly mourners that followed Aunt Theresa's hearse to a wooded cemetery overlooking the Danube.

Afterwards, I'd wandered through her run-down garden where the plum trees were heavy with fruit, and grass grew unfettered over graveled paths. Walter's dress dagger, complete with engraved swastika and tasseled hangings, and a Luger wrapped in oilcloth, a bullet still in the breech, were momentary diversions, and I sent them on as registered freight. Later, US Customs queried the more substantive diversion of a Persian rug from Theresa's dining room, and overlooked the gold hidden in my laundry.

"Me, I'm happy here," said Morty when he was done. He gathered in the towers of coronal glitter, and slid a pile of bills across the counter. "Nobody bothers me, and if they do, I got my Glock. Tell me, have you been to Lvów? To the killing fields of East Europe?" If he was mocking me, he did so with a complicit smile, sliding the coins into translucent sleeves and shrink-wrapping them with a heat-gun for shipment to London.

Morty's question was straightforward, but his mention of killing fields made me cautious. I kept my answer impartial and strictly historical.

"Yes, I was there recently," I said, "My parents had studied in Lvów, but they'd grown up in the countryside around Domazyr. I drove out past working-class suburbs with shabby tenements and rail-yards full of empty wagons. Off the main highway, the road to Domazyr was rutted and muddy, winding through a misted landscape of birches and bare fields with sagging barns. Rounding a corner, I came upon a shrine overlooking a pasture. A rickety fence enclosed a black wooden cross with an impaled Christ, some stained glass cups with puddled candles, and a wreath of plastic flowers. The mist lifted, and beyond the pasture I saw a sunlit hill with cottages nestled in the tree line. Strips of furrowed land reached downhill from the village. Black and white cattle nosed quietly through the rough grass. Domazyr lay peaceful under the warm afternoon sun. I parked next to a chapel with yellow-stuccoed walls and a golden dome. High in the crown of a nearby water-oak was a huge storks' nest."

Morty looked up from his deft packaging of coins. "Storks were everywhere back then," he said. "They were thought to have an enchanted stone in their skull, an antidote to all poisons." Morty laughed, but a hacking cough intervened. He braced himself against the counter and grimaced. "When I was a child, my best friend was a fair-haired boy called Mirus who lived next door. One day we climbed onto his roof to steal magic crystals from storks nesting on the chimneys. He lost his footing and fell, his fingers scratching uselessly over the slates. A long instant later, I heard the terrible impact on the flagstones below."

"Mirus was buried the day the Wehrmacht arrived," he went on. "Selections and deportations began at once. Professors at Lvów University were assembled in their quadrangles, formed into lines, and shot. Old people and women and children were sent to Belzec and gassed. The countryside became littered with the mass graves of their sons and husbands. In frantic discussions with Mirus's parents at our kitchen table, some papers were burned and others were falsified. My father told me I was now Mirus, and that I would live next door with his parents. Three days later, I watched my mother and father join a grim procession heading for the Kleparów railway station." Morty slid the last cylinder of glitter into a padded envelope. "I never saw them again." My business with Morty was essentially over, and I regretted that I'd rambled on about Domazyr. I gazed in silence at the money arrayed before me and contemplated the unspeakable convergence in our stories. Much too late, a doomed family's last hope was being traded, not for life, but for equity in irrelevant marsh-front property. Morty spread his hands in a gesture of acquiescence and acknowledgement of survival against all odds. His glass eye held me fast, and the other one swept the sidelines, alert for danger. A shadow darkened the Gold Mart window, but it was only the lady with her near-perfect Sharon coiffure.

Two Sisters Diptych

Christian Hicks, Student, College of Medicine



New Normal

Joshua Pagano, Fellow, College of Medicine

Normal: it's just a word,
and it's something
that'll never return.
Since the incident,
my world's changed.
They say, "You live and learn."

But this disease
is your scapegoat:
the reason why we fight.
Since I'm the one afflicted,
I guess you're the one who's right.
I hate
what's become of us
because I hate what's become of me.
We used to try so hard,
but now all we do is sleep.

These hands
are now useless,
but they once made you smile.
I used to love so freely,
but now I'm in denial.
When I look
in the mirror,
is it me or just my shadow?
The eyes look familiar,
but the person behind them: I don't know.

How can you say you still love me
when this is not who I am?
How can the rain love the ground
that used to be a mountain?
You're too polite to abandon me
or maybe just too proud.
You suffer along beside me
as we sleep beneath my cloud.

I remember better days.
My mind takes me far away,
but when I open my eyes and look around,
I still can't accept this comedown.
As I wander, in my darkness, what to do,
I think, "Is this new normal worth surviving through?"

I can't accept this, but I won't let you know
that I'm a stranger, and I miss myself.
But what can I do
when I've done all that I can, and I still
can't get back the life I used to have,
and I can't move on the way I am?

Normal: it's just a word,
and it's something that'll never return.

Chasing Daylight

Kelly Dillon, Staff, College of Medicine



Growing Down

Nicole Bohm, Faculty, College of Pharmacy

Yes, my sweet boy,
when I grow down

I can
Be anything I want to be:
a firefighter, a pilot, a school bus driver.
Warm up my ice cream so it's not too cold for my tongue.
Spin round and round like a snowflake in the wind.

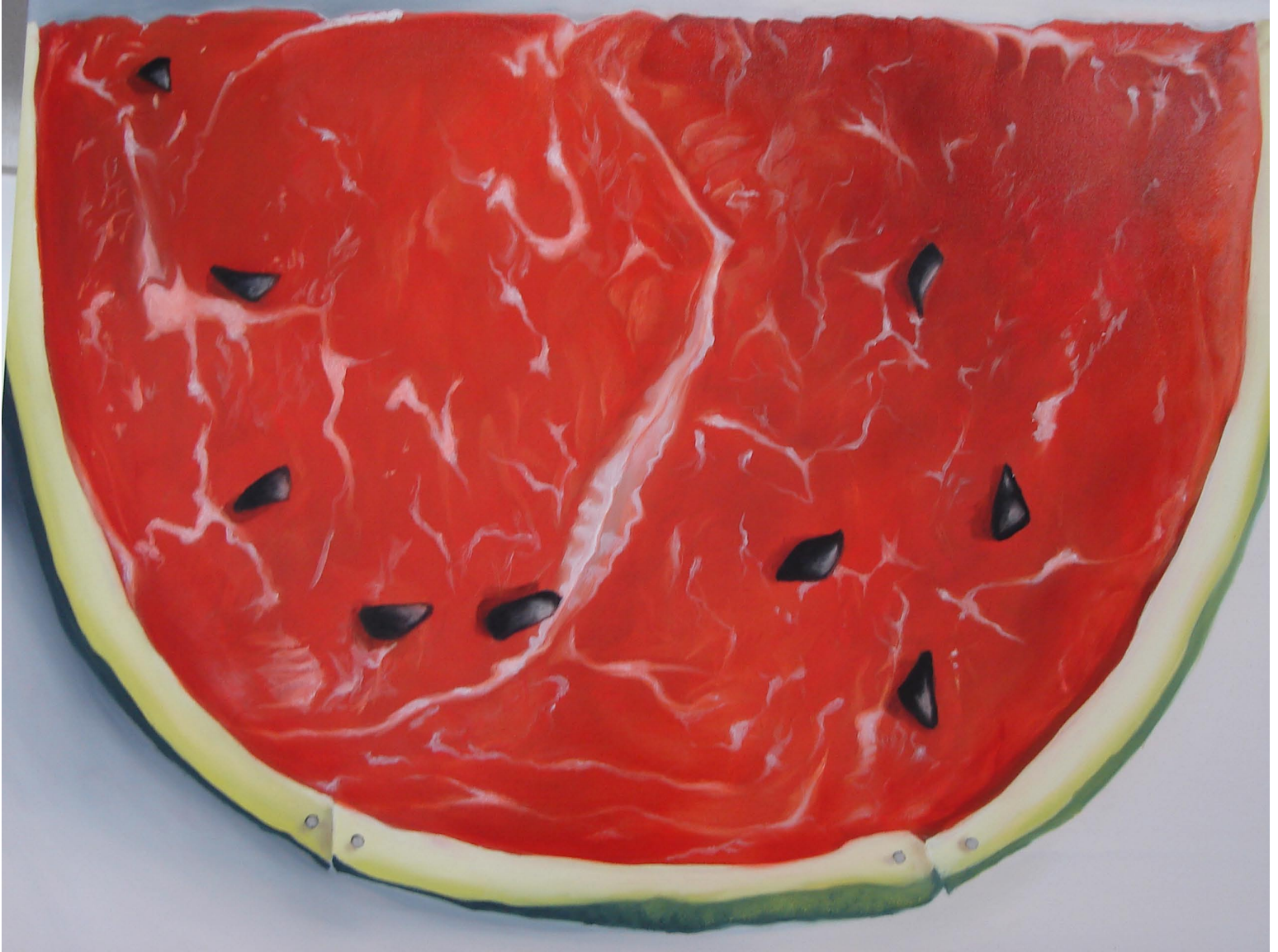
And
Your table will be my right size.
Your soft footie jammies will fit me so well.
You can push me in the swing.

Ah, to shed this grown up skin,
to don the garb of a wild and impetuous child
with an unrestricted view.
To explore with no preconceptions,
to wonder without bias,
to share the joy, the unimpeded bliss.

Yes, I will do my best to grow down today.

Watermelon

Vitria Adisetiyo, Post-doctoral Fellow, College of Medicine



My Father's Desk

Stephen Schabel, Faculty, College of Medicine

I was moved when I read *Flag of Our Fathers* by James Bradley (Bantam Books, New York, 2000) the story of the soldiers immortalized by the Joseph Rosenthal photograph of the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945. John “Doc” Bradley, one of the three flag raisers who survived the battle of Iwo Jima, was James’ father. When “Doc” died in his sons found a box in his closet with mementos of the battle of Iwo Jima and of the flag rising and a Navy Cross that he had been awarded for his valor during the battle. He had hardly spoken to his family of his experiences in World War II and none of them knew of his being awarded the Navy Cross. A parent, a close friend or colleague, a respected teacher are people we may think we know so well that no secret in their life whether good or bad could ever be hidden from us. Our desire to protect those we care about and ourselves from the pain of remembering past failures often keeps our deeply personal or even unethical or illegal past hidden from even those close to us. Many of us keep secret mementos of our past, even the painful parts, to remind us of our youth and perhaps to serve as continual moral guides. Death, particularly when it comes suddenly, robs us of the ability to “cleanse” our past.

My father was Frank M. Schabel Jr. PhD. I know I am prejudiced but he was a great scientist – one of the founders of modern cancer chemotherapy. Along with his colleagues at the Southern Research Institute in Birmingham he studied the biology of cancer cells and the scientific basis of chemotherapy. Many of the most effective techniques and drugs in cancer treatment came from his lab. Dad was 65 and sitting on the stage in Vienna being introduced as the keynote speaker at the 13th International Cancer Congress when he suffered a massive myocardial infarction and died. He left detailed written instructions on what he wanted done after he died that were published as part of a memorial issue of the journal *Cancer* (*Cancer* Sept 15, 1984, 54, Supp 6, pp1132-1152). He did not give instructions though for what was to be done with the contents of his desk.

Several weeks after Dad died, as requested, my brother and I scattered his remains by airplane over the Talladega National Forest. We then went to his office to retrieve personal items for our Mother and ourselves. There were cherished pictures and awards – the usual symbols of a long and very successful career. I found more than I expected though when I



opened the top drawer of his desk (Figure 1). In that drawer I found the usual paper clips, and pencils but in the far back was a small, unmarked cardboard box darkened by age. Inside was bulk rolled cotton, the kind you would have found in a scientist's lab in the 1940's, deeply yellowed by age? I lifted out the top layer of cotton and nestled in the bottom were 24 glass tubes – about 3 inches long and 3/8 inch in diameter. They were blown into bulbs at one end and sealed at the other. Each had a small amount of white powder at the blown end. Each was labeled with adhesive tape - -*Pasturella pestis*, *Bacillus anthracis*, *Clostridium tetanii*, *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Pasturella tularensis*. Many had strain identification numbers, 34-F-5 and 11-A3-3 and all had dates of isolation in 1943 and 1944.

Dad entered the University of Chicago in 1939 for graduate works in Microbiology and received his PhD in 1950 for work on polio virus. His knowledge of tissue culture techniques and cell kinetics lead to his career in cancer research.

After World War I, chemical and biological warfare had been outlawed by a Geneva Convention. The United States was a signatory. President Franklin Roosevelt pledged in 1941 that the United States would adhere to the Geneva Convention and not be the first to use biological or chemical weapons but he wanted the country to be prepared in case Germany or Japan did. In 1942 he convened a group of eminent scientists, the War Bureau Consultants, headed by George Merck to advise him on scientific questions relative to the war. The Germans had used chemical and biological weapons in WWI and there was fear that

buzz bombs falling on Britain would be used to deliver biological agents. Japan used biological weapons against the Chinese in Manchuria since 1937 dropping *Pasturella pestis* infected fleas and cholera and anthrax organisms from the air killing 500,000 Chinese.

Merck chose Camp Detrick near Fredrick Maryland as the biological warfare research facility. Its level of priority was second only to the Manhattan project with a budget of several million dollars per year. In 1943 most of the department of Microbiology department at the University of Chicago was drafted as a unit into the US Army for the biological warfare effort. Dad along with most of his fellow graduate students and faculty formed into a unit of the Army Service Forces Medical Specialty Corp at Camp Detrick. Almost every pathologic bacterium and toxin that could be delivered by air or water was studied for its weapon potential. Delivery vehicles were developed and were at the ready for use if the United States was attacked. Research on vaccines and antiseptics was also carried out and the first biological hazard laboratories were developed. Amazingly, only three workers died during the war of infections at the base.

The camps scientists worked in near total secrecy. Extensive background checks were performed and my parent's old photo albums were even cleansed of any pictures of my father in a lab coat. When he left the camp he had to remove his chemical corps insignia (Figure 2a) and replace them with those of the medical service corp. (figure 2b) so that he would not be recognized as a biological warfare worker. Camp guards were heavily armed.

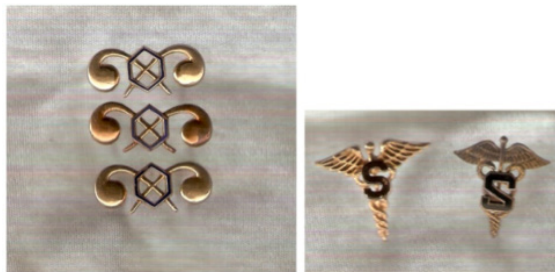
I knew what I had found so I put the box down and found the chief of microbiology at the lab. He knew about Dad's war work at Detrick and when he saw the box and its contents he let out a small gasp and said that he suspected Dad "might have kept them." I asked if I could keep them as souvenirs. He said that some could be made safe with adequate sterilization in an autoclave but that the *Pasturella pestis* and *Bacillus anthracis* could not and he had to destroy them. I encased the tubes in

epoxy as paperweights for my brother and me (Figure3).

Dad had carried off "souvenirs" of his wartime service. I don't know why- a desire to hold on to the past, reminders of terrible moral dilemmas? Even in 1945 this was certainly dangerous and I am sure violated many Army regulations and was probably illegal. The tubes no doubt had been in our house at some time when my brother and I were small children. Twenty-five years later to still have them was potentially dangerous and almost certainly illegal. Had it been after September 1, 2001 I am sure the Department of Homeland Security would have been involved. This was live anthrax and plague. I believe I knew him well enough to know that he intended no harm by taking or by keeping them.

I believe my children love me and hope that my students and residents respect me. When they clean out my desks and closets when I die I know they will find things that are part of my past that they don't know about – bird eggs and feathers from the 1950's, a few flakes of marijuana from the 1960's (I never inhaled), pipes from my years of tobacco addiction, a vial of carbenicillin from 1968 when it was an experimental new drug, ID badges from Michael Reese and M.D. Anderson Hospitals. I hope they will try to imagine what they meant to me and think about why I chose to keep them. No doubt at least some of my lapses in ethics and morals will be found or imagined. I hope they can smile even in the face of the hopefully little shocks and weigh them against the good that I was able to accomplish.

If you don't want to risk having the respect you have developed for someone shaken after they are gone, don't open their desk. Sometimes what you find is only good, sometimes bad, but it always tells you something about them. When I opened Dad's desk I found a reminder of a chapter of American history filled with moral uncertainty and unimaginable danger for this country and the whole of mankind – all in a four inch square box.



The Ballad of Wisdom

Bion Alex Howard, Student, College of Medicine

“A Life of Knowledge!” he Proclaimed!
and Studied onward at his Tome.
alas, the Woman he had Tamed?
Nature’s where she’d Roam.

Their brilliant passion had filled a Surging, Seething ocean,
Yet fought they did, on battles small,
‘Twas Destiny: the world’s unyielding, churning, grinding motion.
And in the Fall, past Summer’s call,

He took that girl for granted.
So now, she’s gone; that guilty soul,
He lost what he had planted.
“Perhaps,” he pondered, “change the Goal?”

Sorrow seeped and steeped; surrounded, soaked the somber student’s
spirit,
Who shall crave the Joyous more,
Than those who travel near it?
It ever pains to close Love’s door.

Who be he?
Who is not me?
Who took his knee?
Who wedded thee?

“A Life of Wisdom!” he Proclaimed!
new Kindness, fueled by Guilt.
so Higher, he then Aimed,
as saddened Fate provides a Tilt.

so SOARED his Spirit, renewed his Vigor,
filled his Mind with new Conviction,
to share majestic hard-begotten Rigor,
with those who Seek a higher Diction.

“I want to twist a Brighter tale!”
He oft remarked, and shuddered, and resolved:
“To Love! To Laugh! To Live and seek my Trail.”
His loss had wracked and changed him, and God was not involved.

“I’ll spin ferocious incantations, inspirations, invocations!”
“With Quiver, scribble rhythmic lore!”
“To counter Hatred, Consternation, Lamentation!”
“Loving, Building, Growing, Healing: these Goals are mine, forever
more!”

Mirror Mirror

Theresa Cantu, Student, College of Graduate Studies



Laser Gaze

Matthew Hale, Student, College of Graduate Studies



What a Little Moonlight Can Do

Adam Smolka, Faculty, College of Medicine

Reality is manifest in many ways, not least through dreams. Billie and I had danced a couple of times during the practica, but I'd been distracted. I had promised my editor a new story by midnight and nothing came to mind. When I gathered my things at the end and left, I saw Billie poised at the top of the stairs admiring the moon as it rose over the harbor into a warm night sky. She had thrown a faux fur stole across her bare shoulders and her satin dress shimmered in the moonlight. I imagined inviting her to walk with me to the waterfront. Once past the Tango Center, the sidewalk outside the Psychiatric Clinic tilted a little towards the street and we leaned into each other to steady ourselves, my hand at her elbow as now and again her thigh grazed mine. We took a shortcut through a parking-lot, deserted save for an idling police cruiser, a watchful figure at the wheel just visible in the glow of the instruments.

As we strolled along a boardwalk bordering the marsh, Billie described a tango pilgrimage she'd made recently. She said she had danced every night into the small hours, never overlooked in the discreet invitations that followed each set. We came to a ramp that led down to a floating dock. Our steps set in motion receding arcs of moonlit wavelets that lapped against cattails at the edge of the marsh. "The men were predatory," she said, "Dancing, I could feel their lust down there." I was lost for words. I brought music to life on my cellphone and touched her waist, but she looked away towards the harbor and said, "Let's walk." I wanted to tell her that tango was just another way of walking, but she knew that better than I did.

We returned to the boardwalk, the sighs of a tango violin animating the sway of her hips. Side-by-side we strolled through a park that followed the contours of the marsh. My tentative hand found hers, and a moment later slipped around her waist. We paused in the moonlit shade of a water-oak and settled into a bench overlooking the silvered expanse of the harbor. Somehow in the course of our murmured conversation, a new intimacy arose between us. We adjusted easily enough, and I must have dozed off for awhile in her lap, because I suddenly awoke, chilled in the cool night air. Sitting up, momentarily disoriented, I saw that clouds had obscured the moon, and I realized that Billie was no longer there. My first thought was that I'd imagined everything, but the faux fur stole draped over me testified to reality. I held the damp lining to my face,

inhaled redolent wisps of Billie, and peered into the dark recesses of the park, expecting any minute to see her emerge. I called her name, softly, but heard only the faint moan of a ship far out to sea.

I walked back the way we'd come. The police car was still in the parking lot, but now it blocked the driveway leading back to the Tango Center. Its flashing blue lights stabbed at my eyes as I drew closer. I weighed in the balance whether to report Billie's absence, or just keep going. Misguided caution overruled propriety, and I sloped off on a tangent, heading for where a wire fence ran into the marsh. I was negotiating the tricky transition from the parking lot to someone's back yard when a spike of chain-link snagged me and my feet began to sink in pluff-mud. Shaking off my shoes, I may have cursed inadvertently and caused a general commotion because next thing I knew an officer stood there shining a steel flashlight in my face.

"Evening, sir," she said, "May I see your ID?"

"Of course," I said, adopting the demeanor of one engaged in perfectly normal activity.

"Is there a problem?"

"There were cries down by the waterfront. I noticed you came through here earlier. Where's your friend?"

"My friend? Billie? We walked down to the marsh a while ago. I woke up and she was gone."

"Is that her jacket?"

"Yes it is. What kind of cries?"

"I'm not at liberty to say. Mostly we're alerted by anything out of the ordinary."

I pictured the dubious high relief image I presented, and wondered whether I qualified. Our conversation was interrupted by crackles emanating from bulky equipment fixed to her belt. She groped for a button and gazed at the moon while reciting a set of numbers that bore the stamp of conviction. She turned to me.

"Sir? I need you to come down to the station. You'll have to make a statement." I was about to say that my statements were usually published in biomedical journals or less frequently as literary fiction, but I held my tongue. My shoes were lost in the marsh, God only knew what had

happened to Billie, and I seemed to be under arrest. “Of course. Glad to help in any way.”

She opened the back door of her cruiser, and I slid inside, expecting to feel her hand on my head anointing me a common perp. The car smelled of cigarettes and old vomit, the cloth seat was sticky, and the Plexiglas partition in front of me was clouded with tiny scratches. She flipped some switches, and we sped out of the parking lot, lights flashing and siren wailing. Gazing out the window, stupefied by the turn events had taken, I caught sight of Billie walking briskly past the Psychiatric Clinic, leaning carefully away from the uneven slant towards the street, her arms crossed against the night chill.

“That’s her,” I cried, “that’s Billie! Drop me off right here, thanks.” I knocked insistently on the scarred partition, but the officer was fixated on a laptop that glowed and blinked beside her. She drove fast with only an occasional glance at the road, seemingly immune to the commotion behind her. I heard a loud pop and then a brief hiss.

“Sir? I need you to sit still and quit banging on the partition. We’ll be at the station in just a minute.”

“Ma’am, can’t you hear me? That’s Billie back there, we’re done here, let me out. I’ve got a deadline to meet.”

She caught my eye in her rear-view and blew through a red light.

“Sir? If you don’t stop banging, I’ll need to call in back-up.”

I twisted around and through the rear window I saw Billie, distant now, poised in front of the Tango Center where the lights were out and the doors were locked. She faced the waterfront, caught for a moment in a pool of moonlight, and then was lost to view as we swerved through another intersection. I fell back in the seat and smoothed the sable folds of her stole in my lap. My watch ticked off the minutes to midnight. I marveled how insidiously tangos earlier that night had segued from metaphor into make-believe. As we slowed and turned into the floodlit precinct, the siren died down and I steeled myself for the task ahead. A new story; a dream manifest as reality.

Untitled

Caroline Cox, Student, College of Medicine



Feet Are Neat

Joe Gulick, Student, College of Health Professions



Will Someone Please Turn Off the Silence?

Deepak Kumar, Faculty, College of Health Professions

it's deafening...the noise-lessness
the uproar of the hush splitting my ears
I hear muteness where there used to be conversation
the sound of missing in place of being
the racket is disturbing...as it cannot be heard
what is the commotion about? Will Someone please.. SPEAK UP
I struggle to be heard over the din of the quiet
...the stillness resonating within
wasn't there a law against silence so loud?
I plug my ears, to keep it out
but the piercing quiet is still audible
I clamor for the unmuting of us
condemn me....for I seek expression.

Bio Sketch

John Dinolfo, Faculty, Educational Affairs and Student Life

The slight trembling
wrists opposing his
dear longing to
speak, the intubated
patient grasps the
aging pastor's weathered
hand and unbound
smile exchanging in
guileless gratitude the
gaze of faith.

Breath

Adrian Van Bakel, Faculty, College of Medicine

As I stand at his bedside,
All that has become familiar
Seems foreign when applied to my father.
Tube inside tube, snaking into his scarred chest, sustaining

I match the rhythm of the bellows.

His breath to mine

Breath that separates him from me

Breath that separates him from life

You are pale, limp, alternating wistful and terrified.

We..., no I, took away your choice.

Please don't feel betrayed.

I know..., no hope, your fate will forgive us.

Free of the appendages, I lean close,

Your words drowned by the raspy ocean beneath your breath.

Next morning, you are quiet, then, fall away.

Grey, your mouth is still open, in a whisper...or a scream?

Lovesick in Haiti

Brice Reynolds, Student, College of Medicine

In the back of a tap-tap

Benches straight parallel, fated
never to cross.

Each swerve, pit, mad rushed pass
jarring one or the other together.

Drenched in sweat, we lock eyes—

My heart flutters, I think

hers does the same. Struck dumb,

pallid face imploring

I dare not open my mouth

praying she is the one who will save

me. Another jerk,

my stomach swings

I nearly touch her and she understands.

We lean in close, heads touch

And spill our breakfasts in her offered bag.

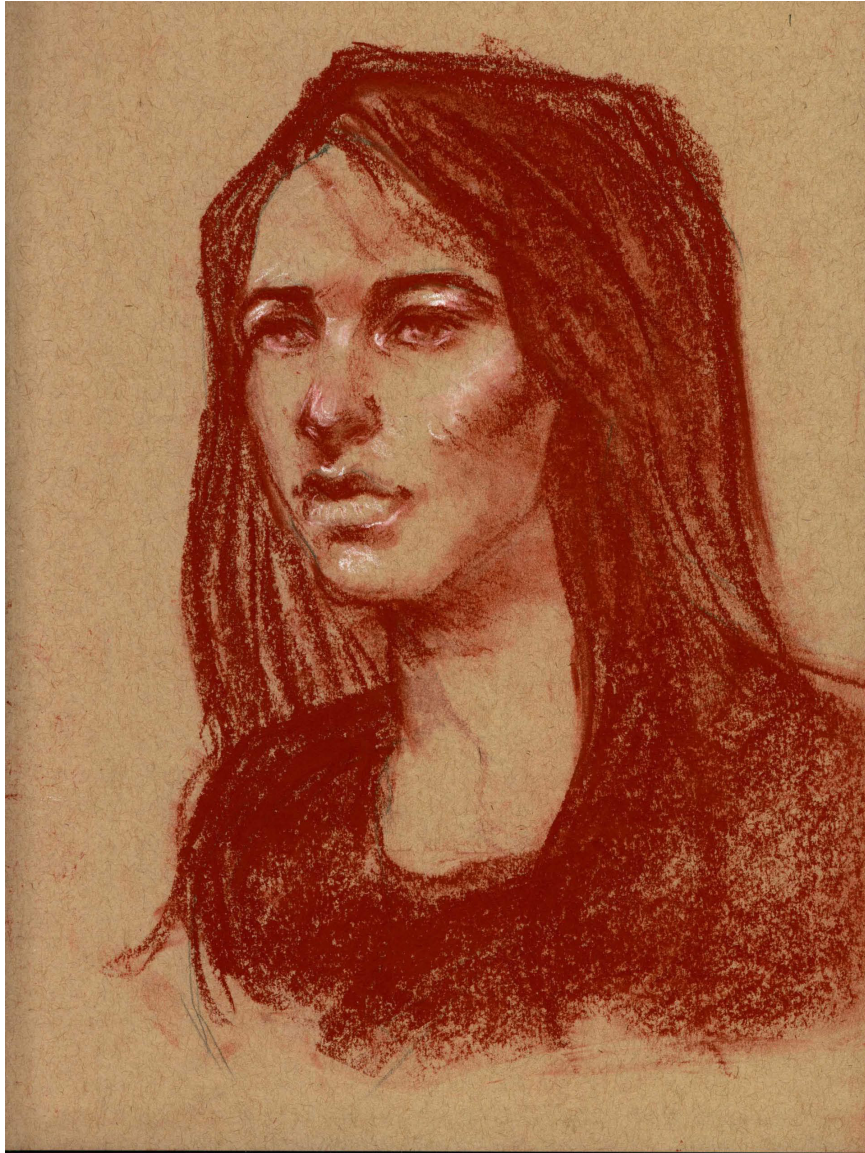
Ice Arch

Gregg Dwyer, Faculty, College of Medicine



A Study of William Maughan's Work

Maham Awan, Student, College of Medicine



What is a Princess To Do?

Brent Paape, Student, College of Nursing

Dedicated to all the little Princesses

When I grow up, thought Princess LuLu, Oh, whatever do I want to do? There are a million things a Princess can be, but what is the best career for me?

Do I want to be the King? Is that a job that I can have? It seems like a lot of fun to be just like my Dad!

Or I could be a Queen, exactly like my Mother. And, leave that King business to my rotten little brother!

I can be the Jester. Jestering would be a lot of fun! Or, I could be the Minister, but I may make a better Nun?

Perhaps, I will be the Butler and open all the doors. Or, I might be the Maid and polish all the floors.

Wait, I know, I will be a Magician and pull a rabbit from a hat! But, it would be more fun to be a Wizard and cast a spell on my brother, for being such a brat!

Maybe I will be a gardener and grow a giant flower. Stop! I will be the Constable, wear a badge, and have all the power!

I know, I will be the Knight and save the Princess in distress! Wait! I am the Princess!

Oh, what shall I do? What will I be? What is the best job for me?

This kingdom is so small and there are so few jobs from which to choose. Perhaps I will leave the castle, what do I have to lose?

I think I want to be an Astronaut that flies up to the stars. But, I would rather be a fearless woman that races in fast cars!

I bet I can be a Musician, I am pretty good at playing the flute. Or possibly I will be a lawyer and earn lots of loot!

I would like to be an Actress and play the starring role. But, it would be more fun to be the athlete that scores the winning goal!

What about a Teacher? I can help students earn degrees. Or, I can be a Doctor and cure all disease

I could be a Dancer. I already have the frilly dress. Ooh, I will be a Detective and make the bad guys confess!

There are a hundred million zillion jobs that I think I want to do. My Mom says I am growing up so fast, so I have no time to lose!

But, I like to be a girl. Doing girl things are what I do great! I would like to stay a Princess. A job will have to wait!

I want to tell secrets and drink tea with imaginary friends. I want to play, and color pictures with my pens!

I want to play dress up, and go exploring in the castle. A job would not allow that. Oh, brother, what a giant hassle!

When I grow up, thought Princess LuLu, Oh, whatever do I do? There are so many things for me to be, but what is the best job for me?

I am just a little girl, so growing up will have to wait. There is Princess stuff that must be done, and I must not be late!

Someday I will have a job, and I will do it very well. But, today I am a Princess and that suits me just swell!

4-Speed Chromatic

Matt Ewald, Faculty, College of Medicine



Pea Plume

Jameela Goudarzi, Student, College of Nursing



Knots

William Oelsner, Student, College of Medicine

A heaviness fell over her chest as she shuffled down the street, moving with a slow determination. The accumulation of aches from the toils of hard work and a life well-lived marred her stride and etched her face with the depth of experience. She clutched her tattered purse closer to her side as the burning pain blossomed into waves of crushing pressure. Sweat stippled her brow and she slumped to the street. *This is what a heart attack must feel like—it's not what I thought it would be; I've survived worse.* A crowd pressed around her and her sense of the world began to grow dull, hot, and darkness began to encroach from the side of her vision. The next few moments came in fragments—like photographs floating in moving water. The ambulance jolted, and she reached up to her blouse, to where a small tear cut the cloth. *My pin—where's my pin; I need it.*

Julian ran down the street, slapping the pavement with the worn soles of his hand-me-down shoes. His mother patiently waited carrying a bag of groceries. He clasped his mother's hand with the sticky hands of a child and looked up to see if he would get in trouble for not keeping up, for looking in the store windows, for dilly-dallying. She smiled. "When are we going to pick Maggie up from the hospital?" The boy asked while reaching to tug on a leaf passing through an iron gate. "We're going to pick your sister up tonight, Dad said she is doing much better and the doctors are going to let her come home." Julian's frayed laces dragged on the cement and he bent to tie his shoes. "I miss her." A small metal pin lay in the crack of the sidewalk, and the boy picked it up after tying his shoes. The pin was well worn and was the shape of a fishing knot. The gold paint had all flaked off except for a few deep creases in the knot. The dull metal surface reminded the boy a worn nickel, and he placed the pin in his pocket.

Isabelle logged into EPIC at the computer terminal and began writing her note. A few loose strands of hair framed her face and she pulled them back into her pony-tail. *I really have to wash this white coat,* she thought as she retrieved an index card from her pocket with a few notes from the last patient encounter. Isabelle felt exhausted, but she loved what she doing. She felt that she was making an impact in her patients'

lives, and this drive gave her the energy to push through the long shifts and unpredictable schedule of residency. She submitted the note, smiled, and headed the see the next patient.

The automatic doors to the pediatric floor opened, and Julian raced down the hall to his sister's room. His father stood talking with the doctor, and Julian jumped onto the bed next to his sister. They started to talk about school; he ate her Jell-O, and soon they were both laughing as he adjusted the bed back and forth with the remote control. "Maggie's been doing much better today, and she is all set to go home tonight; Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, do you have any questions?," Isabelle said while smiling at Maggie. Isabelle started answering Luis' and Martha's questions, and soon Maggie and Julian went back to horsing around. As Isabelle excused herself and started walking for the door, Julian jumped out of bed and ran over to her, reaching into his pocket and pulling out the pin. "Doctor, thank you for making Maggie feel better!" He clamored as he opened his beady hand, revealing the tattered pin. She smiled, ruffled his hair and thanked him.

Isabelle started typing her note, paused, and pulled the pin from her pocket. It was about the same size as one of those American flag lapel pins that are ubiquitous among politicians. The surface was worn smooth, and most of the plated metal had chipped away. The pin was in the shape of a fishing knot, and it reminded her of the lazy summers fishing with her grandfather during her childhood. Isabelle's eyes twinkled as a smile rolled across her face. She placed the pin next to the keyboard and went back to finishing her note. Isabelle's beeper sounded, and she quickly closed out of EPIC and hurried down the hall. The pin fell from keyboard and skipped across the floor.

"I am deeply sorry for your loss." The physician reached out and gently touched the arm of the man. He explained how his wife had collapsed on the sidewalk, and EMS tried to resuscitate her on the way to the hospital. The resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful, and she had passed before arrival. The man began to weep as the physician tried to console him. Tears seeped across his face, and drops started to clump on the

table. Time did not matter, and Frank's body shook as he sat there, slowly bobbing—trying to stifle his cries. Time passed. The heaviness seemed to recede like a tide—leaving a stillness of grief. He rubbed his knee and started reminiscing about his wife, their life together, and all the memories they shared. He slowly started to exit the hospital.



As he made his way down the hall, he stopped—thinking he smelled her perfume. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw something glint. Reaching down, he picked up the pin—her pin. A smile flashed across his face breaking the streams of tears. He ran his fingers over the little pin. There was no doubt, this was the pin he had given her 60 years ago when they first started dating. A pin that had no value, but meant the world to him.

Hungry Hungry Hippos

Katie Boland, Student, College of Medicine



Mishappenings

Andrea Lopez, Faculty, College of Medicine



The City That Sleeps

Chris Attaway, Student, College of Medicine

I live in a city that sleeps,
Whose Christian hearts slow in the darkness,
Whose slender terraces brand the skyline,
Chimneys' gasping the furrow between
Our laughter, a condensation of history,
And my breath, an undertow in this river,

My eyes heavy over the West, these beautiful forests,
When the sword and the shield lay steady,
And indigo was our course between trunk and root,
Their leaves coarse, weighed at a price.
High on horseback, our monarch's crown
Watches us as we sleep, cushioned by the dawn.

We were born in the arms of a centuries-old land, born into sleep,
In the salt-water sway, we are a child, against the eroding marshland,
The unfurling tongue of a river that cradled our capital,
Washed centuries-old brick,
God, who knew how beautiful walls could become,
But I do not fear the cannonball again.

I live in a city that sleeps.
A city that can hush our footsteps into quiet rooms.
Who knew how beautiful walls could become,
The ground floor, the company of our ancestors,
And the magnetic embrace of our own whispers.

And, in the night, poised till the end,
I was swallowed whole in the howling sirens,
We lost everything in the fire, that engulfed our culture,
Each spark to deface our memory,
Walls buckled under the weight of our nation's history.
This is we, born into sleep.

My rotating shoulder blades, when I revel in sleep,
Pending on the morning's rise, I would move little by little.
Every bending bone and muscle a signal to her name,
And my hair pulled by the paws of the city, for a while.
Oh, how beautiful walls can become.

And, in the morning, in our city, our hearts collapse in the streets.
We are the amber. Our hands to open sullenly,
Our breath to ride up and over the steeples.
Here, the seventeenth century would come-to,
From a dream, their glorious mother would obtain
Our lean debt ridden bodies, their skin burned in the royal embrace,
And would not give up on us.

And, in the end, our golden heads sigh as the sky grows dim.
In our slumber, her wounds, a light in the night,
Our yawns billow through empty avenues,
A thousand chevaux-de-frise,
Over the screaming rails' lumbering gait buried beneath our feet,
Our voices purr through the still fog of fear.
Oh, what words can build.

I live hastily in the ticks of a two-faced clock,
Day after day, speak for yourself. From far away,
Legislation rolls over me, turning me like the shores
Tangled upon, a stone gnawed till smooth,
And if I have to, I will be caught in this land's grasp,
Because at one point in my life, there is a breath I must take
And I will find the time, in the city that sleeps.

Untitled

Kenny Vaden, Faculty, College of Medicine



A Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man

Brice Reynolds, Student, College of Medicine

Barnwell stirred.

This was not the first time he had resolved to rouse himself. Swirling on higher planes of poetry, barbiturates, and cask-strength Macallan, he had several times over the course of the morning awakened, made up his mind to exist, and fallen just short of this objective. At the present moment, however, he had at last reached that balance between motivation and inebriation where physical action could resume.

Exactly why he rose, he was not yet sure, but he felt a keening sense of urgency behind the task. Carefully, each extension of limb a conquest, he arose from the chaise-longue that served as the centerpiece of his parlor, office, and bedroom. His glazed eyes dragged across the room — full of trophies of his rambles, mementos of a life lived to glorious excess in as many cities as would admit him, stacked to the corners of the walls. Among them: the finely preserved corpse of the last known pig-footed bandicoot to have walked the earth, a sonnet written in blood by the most beautiful woman he had ever known, and a knuckle bone from the actual (pre-1966) Paul McCartney. He saw none of it. His mind, temporarily choked of blood by his sudden ascent, had reverted to a state of nature. Each neuron sat poised, waiting for that blessed shock of oxygen to return, anticipating that this could finally be it, time to extinguish for good and struggle no more. But return to struggle they did — old man Barnwell's heart had long ago acclimated to this cocktail of bombardments, behaving as if the numerous depressants were merely an excuse to take it easy for a while. Barnwell's mind roared back to life in one flash of lucidity, made all the more stark by the darkness preceding:

Eggs!

He staggered forth to the kitchen, the only other room in the teetering walk-up squat in which he bothered to set foot at this stage of his moral and physical decay. He grasped the icebox door, seeking both stability and ingress to his quarry. Leaning unsteadily on the opening door, the both of them swinging wildly in a compound mass, the great cantilever that was Barnwell reached within and snatched two, three, five eggs, cracked and emptied them with unthinking agility in the cast-iron already slick with fat from many meals before. The smell of frying eggs brought him immediately closer to true consciousness in anticipation

of solid food. As he slipped closer, he noticed a quick sound — a puff, a stage whisper muffled almost as soon as it began — and a flash of light. He saw the sleeve of his coat erupt in sudden, soft flame. Alarm came belatedly, displacing sincere puzzlement — the memory of a spilled dram of Macallan — damn the cask strength, just over proof!

Pain, equally tardy, at last brought the alarm into sharp focus. The flames, having exhausted their initial fuel of exquisite Scotch fumes, had progressed in earnest to wool, linen, and hair. One of Barnwell's legs dropped — through intent, instinct, or a fortuitously timed bodily failure, it was impossible to say — bringing him flush with the kitchen wall. Rolling was out of the question. Overcome with an Australopithecine aversion to the flame, Barnwell battered the arm savagely against the nearby wall, quelling the flame with each blow. Vessels ruptured, bone cracked, it was more than possible he would lose the arm. Barnwell felt none of it, nor cared, satisfied only when the last spark extinguished. Darkness once more.

Consciousness returned before long, accompanied (as it had been on its exit) with the smell of fire. Barnwell scrambled to his knees to see the ancient peeling wallpaper of his kitchen dancing with heat and light, the age-old grease of his egg pan exacting its suicidal revenge for ages of neglect. The conflagration spreading, Barnwell dismissed the thought of saving his squat and sought immediate options of escape. He crept to his stairway and goggled at the impossible, serpentine stairs, convoluted around arcane architectural supports now certain to be lost forever to the Preservation Society of Charleston. Hopeless! He rose up again — careful this time, unable to afford a momentary lapse in blood flow — and sought his balcony. There was no ladder or trellis, no sagely placed oak to aid his escape. From the distant past, a near-forgotten contingency rose to him in his mad determination to survive: the hope that a lone cypress, nearly a story below and a stout leap away, might cushion his fall. Lacking alternatives, Barnwell perched on his roof for the last time, swaying but a little. He formed a spring of himself, condensing all remaining effort into the coming leap. He exploded outward, sailing over the cobbles far below, straight into the heart of the shaggy and inscrutable plant.

Barnwell assessed his new situation. He had tumbled, it seemed,

almost to the ground — but not quite. He had come to rest in the lower boughs of the cypress, battered and bruised, but still breathing. Marveling at his luck to have held fast just short of the hard stone, Barnwell made as if to shift his weight — and realized the source of his great fortune. He had impaled himself snugly on a bit of branch in the fall, ensuring that the ground would be no hazard until some form of help could extricate him — assuming, of course, that his aorta and associated vasculature remained intact and continued to oblige him. Far above him, the fire crackled. Out of the early morning haze, a youth jogged to a stop and scrambled to archive the scene on social media. The boy spied Barnwell bleeding in the tree and started. Barnwell smiled — a new friend, and at just the right time. As the world began to spin again, he requested a boon of his young companion:

“Hospital.”

He closed his eyes, thought better of it, and clarified —

“...Roper.”

And with that, he was off — spinning once more into the embrace of a long-beloved verse and the memory of her lips on his —

Canada Geese

Steven Rosenzweig, Faculty, College of Medicine



Autumn Bling

Lisa Graves, Staff, College of Medicine



Searching for a Signal

Tejbir Dhindsa, Student, College of Medicine

I'm homeless. I have a place to rest my head but not my heart or my soul. I, like many others my age, am waist deep and covered in mud in the trenches of war. War on direction. War on incompleteness. War on ourselves.

While I may not be shaking and quivering or wearing tattered clothes, I am starving and sick on the inside. I'm starving for a purpose, and sick of having to deal with conversations concerning daily mundane paradigms. I'm searching. I'm searching for that something that captures my intellect, my heart, and my soul. I'm searching for true passion.

The last thing I want to be is 50 years old and unsatisfied. I don't want to follow conventional paths because they are safe or easy. "A skilled mariner never learned in calm seas." I need to find my own path. I feel that I need to find the signal in the noise. I need to rid myself of all extraneous diversions and focus. I need to focus on what drives me from my core. Hopefully then serendipity will visit me. That being said, I cannot be lazy and expect everything to come to me. I do however need to keep my eyes down and feet moving. Our generation is a passionate group like most generations before us but we have a voice. Technology has allowed us to broadcast our work and make it the epicenter of not only our lives, but anyone who wishes to jump aboard and take a chance. One thing though, you have to find that passion first.

Passion it seems, only comes to you when you take a chance. Taking a chance on the uncertain. I ask myself, "What do I want to fight for?" That's just it; I want to fight for something. I see documentaries on different causes fighting for a voice to be heard. I see the mercenaries of hope that absolve themselves of contemporary lust and greed. I see the victors of life. Truly happy in their state of fighting for their cause. While they may be cold and shivering or in tattered clothes, they can rest their heart and soul. They have a home. A home of passion.

The Second Chance Below

M. J. Ellison, Student, College of Medicine

It certainly wasn't a typical canvas. It was rough and rumpled. Ridges and creases sliced to and fro at random. It was not white as one might expect, but blue. Cool and crisp and clean and lying on its side, it rose and fell in gasps and bursts, a mountain struggling to sigh, a valley begging for the wind.

The artist was quite strange as well. A paper man, thin and minty green, standing straight and steady. His brushes traded bristles for blades, glinting sharp and small in the glare of the fluorescent suns floating overhead.

The first stroke was straight and smooth, a faint line of the deepest red. But how could that be? The artist had no paint! The page itself, the living canvas, provided the color. A quick nick, and out flowed a stream whose spring remained hidden. Down it trickled, following the bends and folds, dripping and sliding, dropping and writhing, and waterfalling to the floor. A spurt erupted from beneath the blue, splattering canvas and artist alike. Gradually... the sterile became vibrant. The cold became warm. The canvas became a painting.

Yet, with hardly a second glance, the masterpiece was tossed aside to reveal the slow, steady breathing of the second chance below.

Fallen Giant

Matt Ewald, Faculty, College of Medicine



Gertrude's Blue Boots

Nancy Carney, Staff, Educational Affairs and Student Life



An Epistle from My Mother

Jenna-Lyn Johnson, Student, College of Medicine

Mia Figlia,

Greetings to you from this my third year of medical school.

You have been much on my mind lately. About a week ago, a girl in her late 20s – just a little older than you – quietly passed in the hospital. She was morbidly obese and her liver was failing, and her esophagus had begun to bleed. We intubated her so we could try to stop the bleeding, but she never left sedation.

When I first saw her, she was yellow. She was so yellow that I thought she might not be real, like a cartoon character birthed into real life. She had this lost-child look about her, too... It was the same look that you, *mia figlia*, used to get when you were little and looking for me in the grocery or department store.

When we were going to intubate her, I was with a resident and another student, and the resident was trying to get an I.V. going, but he couldn't stick one of her veins. He and the student wouldn't look at her face or in her eyes because we all knew (the girl included) that if we intubated her, she would probably slip from her already loosened grasp on life.

I know that you will liken our intubation of this girl to a veterinarian giving a kitten its final dose, or to the mowing over of flowers that bloomed, but didn't bloom enough. I know that you will bring up how grief-stricken I felt when I fed our cancer-riddled puppy his last spoonful of peanut butter. I know that you will ask about her family. But the thing is, *mia figlia*, she didn't have a family. This girl, who was only a little older than you and dying, was alone.

I looked at this girl, *mia figlia*. I looked at her reddened cheeks which were wet from tears. Her dull, greasy brown hair. Her fingernails which were torn down to the skin. Her soiled hospital gown, the little pinpricks of blood on her arms from where the resident kept trying and trying and trying to find a vein...

I took this girl's hand. I brushed her hair from her face. I gave her a tissue from my coat pocket (remember how I always carry tissue with me, just in case?) and I wiped away her tears, like I used to do for you when you fell down and scraped your knees. I didn't tell this girl that everything was going to be okay, because it wasn't, but I did tell her that I would hold her hand until the resident found a vein, that I would be with her until it was over.

She needed a mother, *mia figlia*. She needed me.

Be well, do good deeds, stay in touch,

Tua Madre

The Visit

Lynn Smith, Staff, College of Medicine

Like a fragile bird, her hand rests in mine, and we consider the trimming of her nails. She says they used to be perfect but never wanted to grow past where she used to bite them as a young woman. I tell her mine used to be pretty nice, but lately I've had jobs that required shorter nails. "They used to like a French manicure," I say. Just naturally they looked like that. She sighs about both of our good old days and pats me with her other hand. She knows where she is, and I am not so caught up in the ebb and flow of days that I haven't counted the steps from my mid-life to her place so near the century mark. "I used to never let them get like this," she says, and I contemplate where to begin...the thumb? The little finger? I wonder how this will work with her facing me. I am so used to holding children on my lap to trim their nails, and I feel awkward and backward. As I look down at the thickened nails, I do not anticipate much change in the situation. "I just file them," she says, and I doubt it. She takes a moment to search through the top drawer of her bedside table then hands me a small packet of emery boards. The thought of the sandpapery surface reminds me of scratching a chalkboard, but there is no one else minding this detail for her. My hand looks capable and protective cradling hers. Her veins are dark blue, and her skin has smoothed to a gloss. Things have begun to show up—rough patches, thick places, yellowed and bumpy fingernails. She muses that I should take more time for myself, and her wisdom in this area is infinite since she lived a raucous sort of life being torn in all directions from the time she was very young. I have not lived a hard enough life or experienced sad enough times for rest, I think. Rest is for people who need it. I'm fine. We speak of the gravity of life and the respite we receive now and then. She stretches her fingers in my palm until I take hold of them gently, one by one, to buff away the overgrowth. Her cool hand is all spots and knuckles. She has foregone the Band-Aid on her arm today where a large red bruise spreads like a starburst just under the paper covering of her skin. I can tell she is not sure that I want to do this, but I hold her and continue until we both believe I do. Our small talk is becoming about where we have been and how those places have shown up in our hands. She describes snapping beans and canning them. She tells me of typing in the railroad office. I was a hand model once, I tell her. She smiles and closes her eyes. "I see." She tells me this as if she is

reading the warmth of my palm and my past, and my desperate struggle to be more than I think I am. Her edges are filing down smooth into short ovals of which I am proud. Look what I did! I want to show her off. She admires them and feels them against her own palm and smiles. "You have nice nails, Grandma," I tell her. She had been wondering what she was going to do about them, and I had been wondering what we would talk about and afraid of what I would find when I got there. Would she be waiting for me? Aware of me? When I arrived, she had been lying down on her bed exhausted and sniffing from a cold. She had no Kleenex in her room, so I had gone on a search for the one box shared by the 12 people on her floor and made a quick list of things to bring her later.

Satisfied with my work, she crosses her other hand over to me, and I start on the little finger, then the ring finger that is now free. I imagine the horror of her husband sometimes, but I believe her when she says it wasn't always like that. "He was sick," she says, "I'll say," I think. She learned to be nimble. She learned to dodge him. These hands held his demons at bay. I work on the rest of her fingers gently. I know what these hands have been through. I am sure I don't know everything.

She tells me where to find a pan to soak her feet. I am eager to get started on this since I now feel equipped for such work. In her room she has everything she needs neatly tucked into reachable places. I find the pan holding a miniature box of Tide and a supply of toothbrushes she won at Bingo, where the prizes are toothbrushes or candy bars. I have been the recipient of the candy bars, but she holds onto the toothbrushes. One never knows. I turn on the water and let it warm for a minute. By the time I have gathered a clean towel she is lying down on top of her covers again with her head on her satin pillow. I empty the water, dry the pan, and stow it back on the floor, replacing the Tide and the stash of cellophane covered Bingo toothbrushes. Plans here simply fall off the map. Losses are cut, and one moves on to the next activity, the next breath.

I leave my shoes on the rug and fold myself at the end of her bed where I can sit in the sunlight near her feet. They are tinier than I'd imagined. The neglected nails of her pinky toes are scarce, misshapen points. I file

away and soften all of the edges. The tops of her feet are high and seem to be stuck in an arched position as if she'd been walking around the retirement home in a pair of stilettos. I warm lotion in my hands and rub it into the delicate skin of her ankles, feet, and her legs. She smiles with her eyes closed. She is sure now that I want to be there. I wonder at the notion that we never stop needing to be touched. I move to the side of her bed where I can reach each of her hands in my hands. I tell her that this brand of lotion is good for the nails and will help them not be so brittle. There is always something. You would think, "Who cares about brittle nails at 90?", but it turns out to be an important thing. She is resting and content. I bend down to hug her and tell her I'll be back in a few hours with her own box of Kleenex and ask if she'll have some orange juice at lunch. She says she usually has milk and I know she will not have the juice. She is almost asleep resting on her own bed from her own house below the framed needlepoint pictures her mother stitched and a cheerful window that tosses sunlight across her bed.

I cover her with the kind of afghan that grandmothers keep on the backs of sofas—black with circles of over-bright color. She smiles up at me, and I put on my jacket and get ready to go back to the rest of the world. People rush in and out of places like this, I realize, without knowing what a haven it can be to have a quiet space where the world stops. It is a waiting room in which her favorite things and her most comfortable things have been placed. Time is not whizzing by at the same breakneck speed as it is out the window. Soon I will be caught up in it again like Dorothy in the cyclone. I want her to know that where she is right now is an okay place. There is no manual to say what happens next, but there are people who will be there to help her along her way and who will not resent the task. I kiss her on her forehead before I leave, much like I kiss the foreheads of my children at night. In these moments I pray that there will be someone to drop by for them, that their nails get filed and that they are able to rest in the end of their years under some blanket of comfortable memories—an afghan woven of times that bring them joy when they are far, far away from me. She is asleep like an infant now. I kneel beside her one more time, a granddaughter turned mother pushing her hair behind her ear, patting her back, leaning down to kiss the back of her hand.

Peace

Dee Norton, Staff, College of Medicine



Archtop Guitar

Steven Rosenzweig, Faculty, College of Medicine



